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ABSTRACT

This report describes the Colorado Alternative Teacher Program, mandated by the state, that enables individuals with bachelor's degrees to enter approved alternative teacher certification programs developed by school districts, boards of cooperative services, independent schools, and institutions of higher education. The Colorado Department of Education issues a one-year alternative certificate when an approved candidate is employed. The certificate enables the individual to be employed as a teacher and to participate in the school-based experience under the supervision of a master/mentor teacher, building principal, and representative of an approved institution of higher education. During the 1-year training and supervision program, the teacher completes 225 clock hours of professional preparation. Alternative teachers who complete the program are issued a standard general teacher certificate valid for 5 years and renewable. The report provides a framework for examining: program development; site-based training organizations; the 44 alternative teachers employed in approved alternative programs for the 1992-93 school year; and information concerning the program's operation for the 1992-93 school year. The document concludes with a discussion of concerns identified by the Colorado State Department of Education with respect to the program's future. (LL)

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Alternative Teacher Program

Report to the General Assembly
1992-93

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Alternative Teacher Certification

January 1993

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Alternative Teacher Program

Report to the General Assembly
1992-93

This report on the Alternative Teacher Certification Act is presented in accordance with 22-60-117 (1) (a) through (i), C.R.S. It provides information on the second-year operation of alternative teacher programs.

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Alternative Teacher Certification

January 1993

Colorado's Alternative Teacher Program

Colorado's Alternative Teacher Program was created by HB 90-1150. The bill amended Article 60, Teacher Certification Act of 1975, 22-60-101, C.R.S., to create a program to enable individuals with bachelor's degrees to enter approved alternative teacher certification programs developed by school districts, boards of cooperative services, independent schools, and institutions of higher education. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) issues a one-year alternative certificate when an approved candidate is employed. The certificate enables the individual to be employed as a teacher and participate in the school-based experience under the supervision of a master/mentor teacher, building principal, and representative of an approved institution of higher education.

During the one-year training and supervision program, the alternative teacher completes 225 clock hours of professional preparation. Alternative teachers who successfully complete the program are issued a standard Colorado Type A, General Teacher Certificate valid for five years and renewable. Legislation also called for the development of a minority alternative teacher recruitment and fellowship program to be funded by bequests, gifts and grants.

The State Board of Education promulgated rules for the implementation of the program and developed application procedures. CDE continues to provide technical assistance, reviews all applications for alternative teachers, and monitors and evaluates approved programs.

Program Development

In August, 1990, CDE rules were drafted for the purpose of implementing the legislation. A work committee was formed with representatives from public schools, independent schools, institutions of higher education, boards of cooperative services, parent and teacher organizations, and the business community. The committee and Department staff met through the fall and worked closely with other states, including New Jersey, in the development of the program. Rules for alternative teacher programs were adopted by the State Board of Education in January, 1991. The State Board continues to be sensitive to legislative intent and wherever possible avoids unnecessary regulation. Colorado's first alternative teacher programs were implemented September 1, 1991.

Program Operation

To offer an approved program, the designated agency, comprised of school districts, independent schools, boards of cooperative educational services and institutions of higher education, submits a proposal to the State Board. Proposals detail instruction and supervision plans for delivery of the program to alternative teachers.

Interested candidates who contact CDE receive alternative teacher program application and information packets. To be eligible to participate in a program, each candidate must:

- Have a bachelor's degree.
- Pass Colorado's basic skills test.
- Be able to demonstrate subject matter knowledge through academic preparation, standardized assessment or portfolio.
- Pass a background check as required by statute.
- Agree to participate in an approved alternative program.

As of December 31, 1992, CDE approved 191 candidates.

Training Programs

As authorized by statute, the State Board of Education approved nine alternative teacher certification programs for the 1992-93 school year. They are: East Central Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Mesa County Valley School District No. 51, Northern Colorado Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Rio Blanco Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Roaring Fork School District Re-1, San Luis Valley Board of Cooperative Services, Stanley British Primary School (nonpublic), Southwest Board of Cooperative Services and Weld Board of Cooperative Educational Services. These nine organizations serve as umbrella agencies for 117 public school districts and four non-public school alternative programs.

Employed Alternative Teachers 1992-93

The following is a breakout of the 44 alternative teachers employed in approved alternative programs for the 1992-93 school year:

Agency Name	# Employed	Elementary	Secondary	mdl/K-12
East Central BOCES	6	1	4	1
Northern CO BOCES	24	6	17	1
Rio Blanco BOCES	0	0	0	0
Roaring Fork	0	0	0	0
San Luis Valley BOCS	2	0	2	0
Stanley British Primary	11	11	0	0
Southwest BOCS	1	1	0	0
Weld BOCES	0	0	0	0

The teachers were employed in sixteen districts in the areas of Elementary Education, Secondary Drama, Middle School Science, Secondary Business, Secondary English, Secondary Mathematics, Early Childhood Education, Secondary Japanese, K-12 Art, Secondary German, Secondary Science, Secondary Home Economics, Secondary Science, Elementary Physical Education and Secondary Social Studies.

In the process of evaluating the 1991-92 program, alternative and mentor teachers expressed the need for regional meetings for the purpose of sharing ideas and developing mentor and alternative teacher networks. In response to this client request, CDE held Alternative Program Regional Meetings in Grand Junction and Denver in October. All participants expressed satisfaction with the program for the first two months of operation. Spring Regional Meetings are scheduled to be held in Grand Junction and Denver during April.

Information Concerning the Operation of Colorado's Alternative Teacher Program pursuant to 22-60-117 (1) (a) through (i), C.R.S. for the 1992-93 School Year

(a) The number of school districts, boards of cooperative services, and accredited independent schools which have alternative teacher programs.

117 districts and four accredited independent schools were approved for the school year. No programs were disapproved. Sixteen schools employed alternative teachers.

(b) The number of persons who applied for employment as alternative teachers with school districts, boards of cooperative services, and accredited independent

schools having alternative teacher programs and the number of such applicants actually employed as alternative teachers in such alternative programs.

The designated agencies reported that 397 persons applied for employment as alternative teachers. Forty-four applicants were employed as alternative teachers.

(c) The number of alternative teacher certificates issued by the department.

The department issued 44 alternative teacher certificates.

(d) The number of alternative teachers who successfully completed alternative teacher programs, who were recommended for certification by a school district, a board of cooperative services, or an accredited independent school, and to whom a general teacher certificate was issued by the department.

For 1991-92, twenty alternative teachers successfully completed alternative teacher programs, were recommended for certification by a school district, board of cooperative services, or an accredited independent school and were issued a general teacher certificate by the department.

(e) The quality of alternative teachers specified in paragraph (1) of this subsection (1), as indicated by performance evaluations conducted pursuant to the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education.

The designated agencies reported 36 alternative teachers in the above average range and 8 alternative teachers in the average range. The evaluations were based on three months of employment.

(f) The rate of attrition of alternative teachers to whom a general teacher certificate has been issued by the department as compared to the rate of attrition of teachers who were not alternative teachers to whom a general teacher certificate has been issued.

The designated agencies reported employing all but four of the twenty alternative teachers who participated in the program for the 1991-92 school year. These four alternative teachers were not reemployed in the school where they completed their alternative teacher program due to a lack of vacancies.

The attrition rate of non-alternative teachers was 7.9% for the 1991-92 school year.

(g) The costs incurred by the state of Colorado in the preparation of individuals to be eligible to become alternative teachers and to become qualified for issuance of general teacher certificates and the costs incurred by the state of Colorado in the preparation of individuals, other than alternative teachers, to become qualified for issuance of general teacher certificates; such costs shall include, but shall not be limited to, the costs incurred in providing curriculum, approved programs of teacher preparation, and approved alternative programs of teacher preparation at accepted institutions of higher education.

Out of the nine approved programs, five designated agencies operated a program. Based on the reports from these five designated agencies, operation, training and supervision costs ranged from $1,200 to $4,000 per alternative teacher. The average estimated cost per alternative teacher is $3,177.

According to data from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the state reimbursement to public institutions averages $1,667 per semester for a full-time student. Typically, three semesters of professional education courses and credit field experiences are required for certification through a collegiate teacher education program. It is assumed that the cost to the state for a teacher prepared in a state approved program averages $5,000.

(h) The results of any recruitment of minority persons to become alternative teachers, included, but not limited to, the manner in which such minority recruitment occurred and the number of persons successfully recruited.

Eight minority alternative teachers were employed for the second year of the program. The designated agencies reported that no additional recruitment program was necessary to attract qualified minority participants.

(i) The number of minority alternative teachers who were awarded minority alternative teacher fellowships pursuant to section 22-60-116 (1).

The designated agencies nominated eight minority alternative teachers to receive $1500 fellowships.

Comments

The Department will continue its efforts to encourage additional agencies to develop and implement programs which will afford applicants more opportunities for participation.

However, at the current time it is unclear what impact the passage of Amendment 1 will have on these local, site-based training and supervision programs. Reductions in school funding may result in fewer opportunities for employment of new teachers.

The Department has identified the following areas of concern:

(1) Although applicant interest in the alternative teacher program remains high, Colorado school districts do not generally lack certified personnel for existing positions. Increased growth in the second year is attributed to the statute which states that Letters of Authorization Type III, Emergency, may not be renewed unless it is determined that the establishment of an alternative teacher program is not a practicable solution to a demonstrated teacher shortage. Of the 44 alternative teachers employed for the year, 13 were previously on Letters of Authorization.

Program growth is projected to remain stable or slow depending upon the ability of schools to maintain current staffing opportunities under Amendment 1.

(2) Institutions of higher education continue to be slow to respond with assistance to schools for the development and implementation of alternative teacher programs.

(3) Considerable staff effort continues to be devoted to promoting the program through direct mailings and meetings with superintendents, headmasters, directors of boards of cooperative services and college officials. To enhance program development, the Department is hosting a series of Alternative Teacher Program Regional Meetings.

In addition the Department is entering the third and final year of a $150,000 grant committed by the Gates Foundation to provide direct financial assistance to districts to defray the costs of program development and implementation. As the Gates Foundation support decreases, it is anticipated that alternative teacher fees will increase for program participation.